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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: 10/4/56

SUBJECT: German Defense Contribution and US-German Relations

PARTICIPANTS: Chancellor Adenauer  
Deputy Under Secretary Robert Murphy *by*  
Mr. Trimble (for part of discussion)

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During the course of a two-hour conversation with Chancellor Adenauer, who seemed to be fully prepared for the discussion, he gave me a review of the features which led to his expressed doubts regarding shifts and changes in the American attitude and policy. I opened the conversation by extending warm congratulations over the successful conclusion of the Franco-German negotiations on the Saar. The Chancellor beamed with satisfaction and described his meetings with Mollet as extremely satisfactory. He said that he had formed a high opinion of Mollet's ability and character, and had felt that Mollet would continue to make a real contribution to Franco-German cooperation. I told Chancellor Adenauer that I had always regarded Franco-German rapprochement one of the major keys to European peace and unity. He declared that there is no doubt about that, and that he felt that the successful conclusion of the negotiations marked a tremendous step forward in the direction of European integration. He felt that it would also promote a more affirmative attitude on the part of the British, would stimulate achievement of EURATOM and work toward the establishment of the common market.

The Chancellor having been alerted by Hallstein and others as to my interest in discussing his remarks regarding the "Radford Plan" and his doubts about a trend in the United States towards isolationism and "Fortress America," the Chancellor launched into a lengthy description of the reasons which he said led him to serious entertainment of these doubts.

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He referred to his meeting with Secretary Dulles in June, at which time, he said, he received absolutely no indication of the "Radford Plan" or any change in our policy. I suggested that it would have been difficult for the Secretary to have referred to these things as they were simply non-existent. The Chancellor then referred to the spate of newspaper stories on the subject, especially the Tony Leviero article in The New York Times in July and a number of other articles, a collection of which he had before him. He referred especially to The New York Times and to Time. He said that these articles could not have appeared at a more unfortunate moment. Before their appearance, he said, there was no question whatever that the Bundestag would have passed a law calling for an 18-month period of military service in West Germany. After the appearance of these articles, it was utterly impossible to obtain the required support for an 18-month period of service, and this led to the Cabinet's decision to support only a 12-month period.

During the course of the discussion, reference was made to the Chancellor's letter to the Secretary of August 11. I expressed the opinion that the Secretary had been hurt by the Chancellor's reference to American unreliability. The Chancellor vehemently asserted that it was not his intention in any sense to be critical of the Secretary, and that it was only because of his close association with and affection for the Secretary that he wrote the letter on a personal basis. He asserted that it did not form part of the official files in his office, and that he regarded it strictly as a personal communication. Nevertheless, his conviction remained that there had been a change in our policy which he thought was engineered by others than the Secretary. He said he had mentioned some features of his doubts to the Secretary last June. He felt that there were forces at work, perhaps in the Pentagon and in the White House, which were not in harmony with the Secretary's views. It was clear from his remarks that he labored under a certain apprehension that a Russo-American agreement would be worked out which at one point might leave our NATO Allies, including Germany, "high and dry."

The Chancellor then referred to his conversation on September 11 with Secretary Quarles and Ambassador Conant. What Quarles had told him about American inability to meet the enormous expense which is attached to the development of our Nuclear Power and Guided Missile Programs and the maintenance of military personnel in its present magnitude had greatly disturbed the Chancellor. Quarles, he said, had also made the fantastic statement (in which Ambassador Conant seemed to concur) that the American strategic plan would permit a whole week to elapse in the case of an atomic strike against the United States by the Soviet Union. I insisted that the Chancellor must have misunderstood Mr. Quarles' remarks, and assured him that American planning did not envisage any such absurd proposition. He continued to insist that it did, that Mr. Quarles had been quite clear, and that Conant had concurred. I told him I would consult Ambassador Conant who was ill in bed, but with whom I had talked before seeing the Chancellor, and I could again assure him that he had misunderstood, and that the American reaction would be counted not in terms of one week, but in a matter of minutes or hours, at the most. At the end

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of our conversation on this point, which was lengthy, the Chancellor's fears seemed to be allayed. It was clear to me, however, that in view of the rather lengthy litany of fears and anxieties which he expressed throughout our conversation, ~~that~~ he is in need of additional briefing which will give him a clear understanding both of the American power position and a better notion of American strategic planning.

In brief, the Chancellor seemed to have arrived at the conviction that there had been a fundamental change in American policy which contemplated withdrawal of forces from abroad, especially Germany, and a reduction in the national defense effort. He felt that there were forces at work in Washington looking to an understanding with the Soviet Union, and that there is substance to the American reports regarding a planned reduction in American military personnel. He also seemed to believe that the American strategic concept relating to the possibility of Soviet attack against the United States is deficient. All of this added up in his mind to the conviction that NATO is in serious danger of disintegration, and that if this were all true, the German defense effort is a futility.

I emphasized that these views are in direct conflict with what I believe are the facts, and certainly seem to conflict with the views of Secretary Dulles. He again said that he had no doubts regarding Secretary Dulles' position, but that he is convinced that others in the American Government entertain different views. He cited remarks of Secretary Wilson, for example, and Mr. Stassen, and referred to information which he had to the effect that the White House might be directly in contact with Moscow, by-passing the Department of State. I quizzed him on the sources of information which he did not identify but which he seemed to feel are reliable.

I explained to the Chancellor that it is considered unfortunate that in making references to American policy, he and his government should publicly rely on newspaper reports as though our relations were not sufficiently close and dependable. He was obviously embarrassed, and agreed that this was unfortunate and should be avoided in the future. Throughout this conversation, I was not unaware of the Chancellor's domestic political problems and the possibility that he and his party's leadership found it convenient to peg the decision for a twelve-month period of military service on allegations that American policy changes made it impossible to call for an 18-month period. I pointed out that we were on a 24-month basis, and that in proportion to both population and resources, the American effort far exceeded the proposed German program, citing the comparative figures and ratios. In addition to the German delay in launching any program at all, what they proposed to do as the

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maximum in point of manpower, when accomplished, represented only about one-half of the American manpower effort, and that in relation to their budgetary planning, American expenditures represented three or four times the proportion to resources for which the German plan would call. This seemed to impress the Chancellor who gave a long explanation attempting to prove that greater reliance on a volunteer system by the Germans would lead to a higher quality professional army, and that there would be many exceptions to the 12-month rule calling for longer periods of service on a voluntary basis in a number of categories. The Chancellor repeatedly assured me that we had no cause for anxiety regarding the German rearmament effort, and that the German Federal Republic would make its full contribution to the NATO effort. I also drove home the point that the German decision would be bound to have an impact on the programs of other members and might prove injurious to the Alliance. On this he disagreed and declared that the NATO partners would soon be satisfied and agreeably surprised by the efficient results his Government would achieve in the military field.

I also referred to that part of the Chancellor's conversation with Senator George in which the Chancellor asserted that there was lack of coordination in NATO and that Ambassador Perkins was not kept adequately informed by the United States Government. I pressed the Chancellor for his reasons in making these assertions to Senator George and inquired if it were not indiscreet whether he could indicate the source of his information. The Chancellor replied that his principal source was Blankenhorn but that there was common talk to the effect that Perkins was neglected by his Government. For example, it was well known that Perkins was totally unaware that Senator George was to be appointed to his present assignment. This created an unfavorable impression generally. Then again he said in connection with the Suez discussions in the NATO Council, when it came to Mr. Perkins' turn to speak he had nothing to say. This was also the subject of adverse comment and the implication that there was a lessened American interest in NATO affairs.

The conversation broke up for dinner with profuse expressions of the Chancellor's regard for and understanding of the Secretary's support. He was particularly pleased with the Secretary's remarks at his press conference in which he endorsed the Chancellor's Brussels statement regarding European integration.

G:RMurphy/vh  
10/8/56

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